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12/19/2000

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POSTMUS, BOARD APPROVE "TENT ANNEX" AT JUVENILE HALL

SAN BERNARDINO—First District San Bernardino County Supervisor Bill Postmus today voted to move several hundred juvenile inmates--who currently have Central Juvenile Hall in San Bernardino bulging at double capacity--to alternate facilities, including a "tent annex."

The current San Bernardino Central Juvenile Hall is authorized to house 277 juveniles. Its current average daily population is 536.

The Board action was to approve a re-allocation of \$1.7 million originally budgeted to build a temporary "barracks" structure for 90 youths at the current San Bernardino juvenile facility property. The Board also approved an "Emergency Response Plan" that would—if approved by the California State Board of Corrections—provide state-mandated relief of overcrowding via a four-point strategy.

The strategy includes the following:

- Board of Corrections approval of an increase of 70 approved beds in existing facilities;
- A court-approved "House Arrest" program with electronic monitoring and supervision of 50 additional youths;
- Placement of 100 additional youths in Public/Private Sector Placement Contracted facilities; and
- "Hard-back" tents (military-type), increasing beds by 120;

The Public/Private Placement portion of the plan is intended to secure a contract for an off-site facility for housing 100 youths. One of two proposed applicants intends to place up to 126 youths at a dormitory at the Southern California Logistics Airport, formerly George Air Force Base, in Victorville.

The Board decided against building a 90-bed wooden "barracks" or dormitory facility that was originally slated to be built at the San Bernardino site because of concerns over

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TENT ANNEX
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long-term maintenance of these “permanent” facilities. Probation Department officials also stated that they prefer “brick and mortar” or concrete buildings for long-term needs.

The tent proposal, the first of its kind in the state and perhaps the nation, is intended to be a temporary solution (through March 2003), pending the completion of the West Valley Juvenile Hall in 2003 and the subsequent completion of a new 200-bed High Desert Juvenile Hall and an additional expansion of 240 beds in San Bernardino, respectively.

The proposal would be contingent upon a suspension of certain state standards under the jurisdiction of the Board of Corrections.

The \$1.7 million price tag on the plan includes the cost of the tents, increased security personnel, restrooms, plumbing, modular classrooms, fences, and security cameras, among other costs. The tents would be located on the existing Central Juvenile Hall property.

Supervisor Postmus said, “This plan is part of a short-term solution to San Bernardino County’s chronic lack of juvenile hall facilities.

“One reason why I support the tent plan is because it will increase the likelihood that our county’s severe shortage of juvenile facilities will be recognized by the powers that be in state government,” Postmus added.

Postmus explained that in addition to the plan, which was unanimously approved by the Board of Supervisors today, two sites in Apple Valley are currently undergoing environmental review to determine their suitability for use as a future High Desert Juvenile Hall. The Board of Supervisors approved a contract on Dec. 5 with a firm that will assist the County in securing \$20.1 million in state and federal funds to go toward the \$26-28-million High-Desert Juvenile Hall.

“Nowhere is our shortage of juvenile hall space worse than it is in the High Desert,” Postmus said. “Addressing the shortage of juvenile hall facilities in the High Desert is one of my highest priorities.”